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LET'S LIBERATE LABOR

The power of unions to shut down industries vital to the health, welfare, and security of the entire nation rests on government favoritism. Indeed, monopolistic unions — those with power to force the will of union bosses on employees and employers alike — probably would not exist without the special privileges which federal law now grants them.

The Taft-Hartley Act, while allowing state governments to prohibit "closed shops," permits "agency shops." "Closed shop" means a union-management agreement which requires management to force all employees to join a union and pay dues, if the union can induce *some* of the employees to join. In an "agency shop" contract, management is required to force *all* employees to pay union dues, whether they join the union or not.

Despite all the help unions get from government, however, they have not yet managed to monopolize the entire working force in America. According to the 1967 U. S. government *Statistical Abstract* (p. 246), membership in unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO reached a peak of 18,117,000 in 1960, and has not increased since. One reason for this is Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which provides:

"Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the execution or application of agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment in any State or Territory in which such execution or application is prohibited by State or Territorial law."

As a consequence of this provision in the Taft-Hartley Act, nineteen states have right-to-work laws — not, in any way, handicapping legitimate union activity, but merely providing that individuals cannot be forced to join, or not join, a union against their will.

Results of these state right-to-work laws have been dramatic. The 19 right-to-work states lead the nation in overall rate of economic growth: increasing industrial wages; producing new wealth and personal income; creating new jobs in industry (through private capital investments) at over twice

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the rate of the 31 states which do not have right-to-work laws.[1]

If Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act did not exist, union officials would demand that federal courts outlaw state right-to-work laws. The federal government has no authority to permit, or prohibit, state right-to-work laws; no authority to operate at all in the field of labor-management relations. Yet, it is a foregone conclusion that the present U. S. Supreme Court would illegally usurp power to invalidate state right-to-work laws if Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act were repealed.

Hence, repeal of Section 14 (b) has been, for many years, a major political goal of monopolistic unions. Their last major effort failed in 1965.

Another long-range objective of monopolistic unions is to organize government employees — federal, state, county, city. There are some 12 million public employees in the United States. If they could be induced, or forced, to join unions, or pay dues, they would contribute as much as $700 million a year to the unions.[2]

For a long time, monopolistic unions made little headway in organizing government employees. Americans have seen many examples abroad — in France, Uruguay, and elsewhere — of the extreme danger of having public-service employees controlled by union bosses rather than by the public and the governments they are paid to serve.

When John F. Kennedy — a "friend of labor" — became President, he tried to give the monopolistic unions some help in organizing government workers. On January 17, 1962, President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10988, specifying that:

Employees of the federal government shall have (and shall be protected in the exercise of) the right freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, to form, join and assist any employee organization or to refrain from such activity.[3]

The provision contained in those last six words *or to refrain from such activity*, gave Kennedy's order the appearance of fairness and impartiality; and it backfired somewhat. It became, in effect, a right-to-work law for government employees. Given the right to "refrain from such activity," many government employees refrained.

Nonetheless, unions have made significant strides in organizing public employees. Almost 28% of the federal government's 3 million employees, and almost 7% of the 9 million state and local government employees, belong to unions.[3,4]

In September, 1966, Jerry Wurf (president of the AFL-CIO Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees) spoke with some exultation about the growing trend toward compulsory unionism among public employees. In an interview with *U. S. News & World Report*, Wurf said:

"In a number of very important instances, like Michigan State University, we even got a union shop . . . . It's happening in Michigan, Wisconsin, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts — a whole flock of states."[5]

Many city clerks, municipal employees, and police officers in Michigan must also join labor unions and pay dues — or lose their jobs. The New Hampshire Supreme Court has ruled that police officers in that state can be forced to join an AFL-CIO union, or be fired for not joining.[6]

But there is a potential of $700 million a year to be collected in dues from 12 million public employees, and the union bosses want it all.

Upset because the unions had not managed to organize *all* federal employees following President Kennedy's Executive Order of 1962, George Meany, president of AFL-CIO, asked President Johnson to impose a system of compulsory unionism in the federal service.[7]

Meany suggested that if 10% of employees in a federal department could be induced to join a union, all the others should be compelled to pay the equivalent of union dues even if they refused to join.[7] Labor bosses call this kind of deal a "union security" agreement.

Johnson is, of course, a "friend of labor." He tried, but failed, to get Congress to repeal the right-to-work section of the Taft-Hartley law in

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1965. In 1966, he used his presidential powers to uphold a veto of a right-to-work law which the territorial legislature of Guam had passed by an overwhelming majority.[8]

Imposing compulsory unionism on federal employees is something Johnson can do for the labor bosses by presidential decree, without consulting Congress; but it must be done cunningly, to evoke the minimum of public resentment.

Following George Meany's request, President Johnson, on September 8, 1967, appointed a Labor-Management Review Committee to review experience under President Kennedy's Executive Order of 1962, and to recommend "any adjustments needed now to insure its continued vitality in the public interest." As chairman of the committee, Johnson appointed Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz, a passionate and determined advocate of compulsory unionism who has lobbied relentlessly against right-to-work laws.[6]

George Meany was one of the first witnesses to appear before Secretary Wirtz' committee. On October 23, 1967, Meany told the committee:

"We recommend that the Executive Order be amended to state explicitly that the federal government accepts the principle that unions and management in federal service should have the right to negotiate union security agreements."[5]

On April 2, 1968, Mr. B. A. Gritta (AFL-CIO Metal Trades Council) spoke to a convention of the International Union of Operating Engineers at Bal Harbour, Florida. Commenting on the Wirtz committee, he said:

"I am confident that within the very near future that we will be able to negotiate union security provisions in our contracts with the government, or at least, have an agency checkoff . . . and this would mean everybody would have to pay your organization."[5]

Throughout March, April, and May, 1968, various newspaper columnists in Washington kept reporting that the Wirtz committee was planning to recommend compulsory unionism for federal employees and that President Johnson was expected to give the necessary executive order as soon as the recommendation was made.

Members of Congress, however, could get no information from the committee, the White House, or any other agency of the executive branch.

Consequently, on May 13, 1968, Senator Wallace F. Bennett (Utah Republican) introduced the Federal Employee Freedom of Choice Act of 1968. Bennett was joined by 15 other Senators. U. S. Representative Benjamin B. Blackburn (Georgia Republican), joined by 11 other Representatives, introduced the same bill in the House. The Senate Bill is S 3483; the House Bill is HR 17411. Its provisions:

"Employees of the Federal Government shall have, and shall be protected in the exercise of, the right, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, to form, join, and assist any employee organization or to refrain from any such activity.

"As used in this Act, the term 'employees organization' . . . shall not include any organization (1) which asserts the right to strike against the Government of the United States or any agency thereof . . . or (2) which advocates the overthrow of the constitutional form of government in the United States, or (3) which discriminates with regard to the terms or conditions of membership because of race, color, creed, or national origin."

In support of the Federal Employee Freedom of Choice Act, Senator Bennett said:

"Unfortunately, at the present time it is very difficult to say whether or not compulsory unionism is about to be forced upon Federal employees. Those who are in a position to make this information known have kept it very secret, and . . . the public is left in the dark.

"I believe the concept of voluntary unionism in the Federal service is the only reasonable and moral position which the U. S. Government can take. At the moment, the existence of that principle is dependent upon the President . . . who can change it at will . . . . I believe that the privilege to join a union or to refrain from joining a union should be permanently established by an act of Congress . . . .

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"No American should be forced to join a union by the Government or private industry to retain his job. The right to refrain is every bit as sacred and as important as is the right to join. It is both rights which my bill will protect . . . .

"Good unions do not need compulsory unionism, and bad unions don't deserve it."(9)

The Hatch Act of 1939 prohibits political activity by federal employees. Yet, if unionism is forced upon them, they will be contributing to the political activities of unions a portion of the billions taken from taxpayers for federal salaries. The political activities of the monopolistic unions all have a common goal: converting the American governmental system into a socialist-labor welfare-state dictatorship.

In short, compulsory unionism for federal employees — in addition to placing the security and welfare of the nation at the mercy of such men as Walter Reuther and George Meany — would be another of the many means which the liberal establishment is using to make the American people pay for the destruction of the American constitutional Republic.

We should all urge Congress to pass the Federal Employee Freedom of Choice Act. It will prevent the President from making matters worse in this one area. But that is not enough for the long run.

In the end, we will prevent monopolistic unions from getting a complete stranglehold on our nation only if we elect a Congress that will make *basic* reforms. *The* reform needed in the field of labor-management relations is repeal of all federal labor laws.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) Editorial by Jim Wright, *The Dallas Morning News*, Aug. 25, 1967, p. D4

(2) Article, *National Newsletter*, National Right To Work Committee (1900 L Street N. W., Washington, D.C. 20036), Apr. 19, 1968, p. 2

(3) Article by Ralph de Toledano, *Human Events*, Apr. 27, 1968, p. 7

(4) *Handbook Of Labor Statistics*, U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1967, p. 253

(5) Speech by U.S. Rep. Benjamin B. Blackburn (Geo. R.), *Congressional Record*, May 21, 1968, pp. 4049-51

(6) *National Newsletter* (see footnote 2), Apr. 25, 1968, 6 pp.

(7) St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, May 14, 1968

(8) AP dispatch from Wash., D.C., Oct. 20, 1966

(9) Speech by U.S. Sen. Wallace F. Bennett (Utah R.) *Congressional Record*, May 13, 1968, p. S5377

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